

Hello all,

The weather here in Whittier and Prince William Sound certainly hasn't been as cooperative as I had hoped but things are looking up. We were given a break over the 4th which allowed us to enjoy some fireworks and our annual parade. Here are some updates from the Harbor.

Barry Arm:

City of Whittier Administration met with USGS personnel last week and they brought us up to speed on the Barry Arm situation. Cliff notes version, a landslide event would not result in the devastating 30-foot wave in the Whittier area as previously thought but more likely a wave of 2 meters or 7 feet. With this new information, new inundation mapping will be conducted and updated. We look forward to the new information and appreciate USGS coming down to meet with us. USGS has released a statement and I have included it with this email. Their complete report can be found on their website.

Harbor Area Rest Rooms:

Our installed rest rooms located throughout the harbor system have been becoming maintenance intensive (meaning "nightmare") over the past few years. We contracted with an Anchorage based company to come out and assess the plumbing and they found some major deficiencies in the mechanical flushing valves due to their age and wear and tear. Additionally, vandalism is also to blame and has resulted in unsanitary conditions. We have parts on the way to repair the toilets and as a temporary solution we placed portable toilets throughout the harbor for patrons use. These by no means are a perfect solution however it is the best one we have now. I'm hopeful that the long-awaited parts show up in the next week and we can affect repairs to our installed restrooms. Staff is still cleaning and supplying the portable units on a regular basis. The harbor building restrooms are operational and available 24/7 and showers are available up to 15 minutes prior to the office closing.

Harbor Float Revitalization:

I have had a few harbor users come in and speak to me about the replacement schedule of floats A, G and H. These floats are in desperate need of replacement however the funds necessary to invest is not available (but we have a plan). Some history. Harbors throughout the State of Alaska rely on the Harbor Municipal Grant program to assist with harbor replacement. Bad news is the past two years this funding has been struck from the State budget. The good news is the grant program is back on for the 2023 budget cycle. This grant is highly competitive and relies on municipalities providing a 50% match to execute if awarded. Whittier Harbor took advantage of this grant program as a Tier I recipient when B/C/D/E/X/Z were replaced. It is estimated with rising construction costs that it will run about 5-7 million to replace A/G/H floats. This cost includes the removal of the old wood piles throughout the entire harbor system and replacement with steel piles. The maximum award for the Harbor Grant program is

5 million per community and that would require a 50% match. Here is a link to the program if you are interested <https://dot.alaska.gov/stwdplng/ports/index.shtml>

The Plan: Our Finance Director (Kris) will be submitting a Resolution to the City Council during the next meeting (July 20 @ 7pm) to transfer \$750k of harbor operating funds to an account designated as a Major Repair and Replacement Fund "MRRF". These monies, as well as the current \$400k we have in our Harbor reserve fund will go a long way to start planning out our matching fund's goal needed to compete for the grant. We are optimistic we can compete for a Tier II grant in 2023 for the year 2024. I will continue to work with City Administration and the Council to identify way to reach our goals via grants and funding opportunities.

Dogs:

We have had a lot of visitors to the harbor this summer and many are dogs. While we are happy to see them running around being dogs there has been an uptick of negative K9 encounters resulting in aggressive behavior. Dog waste in our harbor uplands and on the docks is also on the rise. Dog waste and aggressive encounters is extremely concerning to me and I need your help. To address the waste issue, staff installed a dog waste station at the top of the gangway. Its complete with dog bags and a waste can. Please clean up after your pet and for the safety of your dogs and the public, dogs are required to be leashed on the docks and uplands area. Harbor staff and other harbor users certainly appreciate your cooperation with cleaning up and leashing your dogs.

Whittier Municipal Code 12.04.160 (F) Prohibited acts and penalties

F. Allow dogs or any animals to run at large on any the boat harbor facilities. Dogs must be on a leash and accompanied by the owner who will be responsible for cleaning any offal left by the animal. A person who violates this provision is subject to a civil penalty of \$100.00.

Skiff:

The Harbor department has a "new" skiff. The City Manager authorized an emergency purchase of a replacement skiff. We were able to utilize our old skiffs outboard, steering and controls which saved us a lot of money. It handles a little different than our old skiff and the crew is working on getting trained up on its operation. Good to have a skiff of our own back in the water.

Trash/Dumpster Usage:

Trash is one of the Harbors biggest expense averaging \$100K + per year. Not having a local transfer station, all our trash must be collected and taken to Anchorage or Eagle River. Over the past few weeks, we have had several instances where unauthorized items such as tires, appliances, chemicals, and petroleum products have been deposited. The tires/appliances add

a huge expense as we are charged extra for these items. Petroleum products are especially concerning, contrary to popular belief, dumpsters are not watertight, and they leak! Oily waste is hazardous, takes a lot of time to clean up and has the potential of reaching our pristine waters of Prince William Sound. **The Harbor has an oil collection program. We can take oil-soaked rags, used oil and oil filters. Please do not throw these items in the dumpsters or leave them on the docks. Contact the office during normal working hours and we can direct you on how to properly dispose of your hazardous waste or other non-household trash items.**

Port and Harbor Advisory Board Meetings:

There is an opportunity for the public to participate and discuss agenda or non-agenda items during the meeting if there is something you would like to bring up to the Board.

These meetings are held at 6pm on the first Thursday of each month. There are options to attend:

- In person, 3rd floor of the Public Safety Building 660 Whittier Street.
- We also have a YouTube

link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBg7gv6xdpH-LfbwiDwgfHw/featured>

The use of Teams has not been utilized to date but that may be an option down the road if it would be more advantageous than the others.

City Council Meetings:

There is always an opportunity for the public to participate and discuss agenda or non-agenda items during the meeting if there is something you would like to bring up. “The more you know” I always say.

The meetings are held every third Tuesday of the month. The city has several options if you would like to attend.

- In person, 3rd floor of the Public Safety Building 660 Whittier Street.
- We also have a YouTube

link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBg7gv6xdpH-LfbwiDwgfHw/featured>

- Microsoft Teams with a link that can be forwarded to you individually if you are interested in using that platform. If Teams is your preferred method, the City Clerk generates the link the Friday prior to the Tuesday meeting. Send me an email and I can forward the agenda and Team’s link to you.

I will not be participating in the upcoming City Council meeting as I will be out of town. There is only one topic on the agenda concerning harbor business. The resolution discussing the funds transfer that I noted in the Harbor Float Revitalization section above.

Last Word:

Recent article in the Juneau Empire regarding boating safety trends in the U.S. and Alaska. Mike Folkerts was a longtime boater out of Whittier until he moved on to work for the Coast Guard District 17 office of Boating Safety in Juneau. I hope you find it informative. Let's be safe out there!

Boating accidents, casualties expectedly high in 2020

More people on the water with the pandemic means more potential for accidents to happen.

- By [Michael S. Lockett](#)
- Sunday, July 11, 2021 6:30am

While there was a 20-year-high for deaths on the water in boating accidents across the country in 2020, there's a simple explanation for it, said Coast Guard safety experts. More boaters on the water means more mishaps, simply put.

"We knew the numbers would change because the number of people out there boating increased" said Mike Folkerts, boating safety specialist for Coast Guard District 17, in a phone interview. "A lot of people were working from home and were able to get out on the water a whole lot more. They were encouraging people to go out and do that kind of stuff."

According to the Coast Guard's 2020 Boating Safety Statistic Report, 767 Americans died in boating accidents in 2020, up from 613 in 2019, the highest in 20 years. In Alaska, that trend also existed; with 24 deaths, it was the highest in half a decade. The largest portion of casualties by far involved operators without any formal boating education. Accidents in this report refers to anything from falling overboard to colliding with another vessel to sinking.

"It's a little bit challenging. Alaska is one of the last half dozen states that have no mandatory boating safety classes," Folkerts said. "For the most part, people just go out and learn on their own [or from family members]. They don't always learn the best ways to stay safe on the water."

Nationwide, injuries and accidents hit 10- and 17-year highs respectively, a large portion of which involved alcohol use. In Alaska, deaths and accidents involving alcohol went up sharply from 2019 to 2020, going from just one of each to five accidents causing six deaths.

"There's a component of boaters that combine drinking and being on the water. That's the component of boaters we want off the water," Folkerts said. ".08 is considered impaired. But they still have to pass field sobriety tests. We stepped up a little bit of enforcement to make sure people were being safe on the water but it was pretty normal."

Hazardous conditions and inattention at the helm were also substantial causes for misadventure.

The largest single group of deaths occurred in boaters older than 55 and in boaters who were alone in the vessel, according to the data.

The most accidents occurred in July, and the largest number of accidents occurred between 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., and on Saturdays. Open motorboats accounted for nearly half of all deaths, at 49%. Canoes and kayaks accounted for another 20%. Alaska was one of 13 states that had more than 10 deaths per 100,000 registered vessels, according to the data.

Drowning was the largest cause of death, with 534 deaths, or about 75% of all deaths, though many of those had additional factors. Of those who drowned, 86% were not wearing life jackets.

Boating safety courses, life jackets, good planning for weather and sobriety all contribute to a safe and enjoyable boating experience for all, Folkerts said.

• *Contact reporter Michael S. Lockett at (757) 621-1197 or mlockett@juneauempire.com.*

We have recently updated our email list, if you would like to be removed from the mailing let me know your name and email address and I'll remove it.

Cheers to a safe boating season!

Dave

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"Make friends with change, it's the only thing you can count on!"